

REMARKS

The specification is amended to add headings as required by the Examiner, and to provide antecedent basis for certain claim language as discussed below. Claims 1-3 are amended to overcome formal rejections and to present allowed Claim 3 in independent form. Claims 1-3 remain, with Claim 3 previously held allowable in substance if rewritten to overcome the rejections under 35 U.S.C. 112.

The objection to the drawing as containing reference numeral "4", not mentioned in the description, is noted. In response thereto, the specification is amended to identify spacings 4 between adjacent conductors, tracking the wording in original Claim 1 relating to that element. This amendment thus does not add new matter to the specification.

The Examiner's comments concerning the specification are noted. In response, the specification is amended to add headings and to remove inappropriate references to claims. Moreover, amendments to page 2 of the specification provide improved antecedent basis for certain wording in Claim 3, as discussed below.

Turning to the Abstract, a revised Abstract on a separate sheet is submitted. This revised Abstract is identified as an "Abstract", and the language of the Abstract is revised to avoid phrases which can be implied.

The specification, as amended, is submitted to comply with the appropriate requirements.

Turning to the claim rejections under 35 U.S.C. 112, Claim 3 is rejected under the first paragraph of that section because the specification is said not to reasonably provide enablement for "the width of the conductor tracks being a whole-number multiple of 2.54 mm". The applicants respectfully traverse this rejection. Although that specific wording indeed does not

appear in the specification, page 2, lines 15-20 of the specification use the abbreviation "etc." following the descriptions of the conductor tracks as having width multiples of 2x and 3x. The specification similarly characterizes the spacing between adjacent conductor tracks. Page 2 of the specification is amended to provide language conforming to the wording of original Claim 3. These amendments to the specification thus provide antecedent basis for the terminology in original Claim 3 without adding new matter to the specification. Accordingly, considering that the original claims form part of the disclosure, the applicants submit that a person of ordinary skill would find the specification, including Claim 3, enabling as to that feature of the invention.

Claims 1-3 stand rejected under the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112 as indefinite, for reasons set forth in paragraph 6 of the Office action. Claims 1-3 are amended in response to those grounds of rejection. In particular, Claim 1 is amended to delete "the" conductor tracks, and Claim 2 is amended to delete "for example". Reverting to Claim 1, "preferably" – although not found objectionable by the Examiner – also is deleted as that wording might be considered an indefinite limitation.

In Claim 2, the indefinite article is substituted for "the narrowest conductor track" and "the base spacing". In Claim 3, "the width" now identifies -- the width of each conductor track -- and that wording is believed definite as referring to the corresponding wording in Claim 1 (now incorporated in Claim 3).

The applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of Claim 1 based on "an arithmetic sequence" in line 4 of that claim. That arithmetic sequence is not necessarily the same as the one recited earlier in the claim, and so it would be improper to identify the latter-occurring sequence as "the arithmetic sequence".

Turning now to substantive issues, Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102 (b) as anticipated by *Latimer* (3,244,795). According to the rejection, *Latimer* discloses a laminated electrical flat conductor wherein the widths of the conductor tracks (15, 16, 17) are staggered in an

arithmetic sequence, among other features. The applicants respectfully traverse that interpretation of *Latimer* and the rejection based on anticipation by that reference.

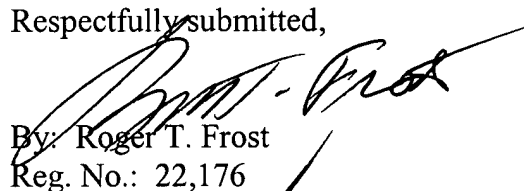
Latimer discloses a stacked, laminated printed circuit assembly. Although the conductor tracks 15-17 are staggered from level to level, those conductor tracks always have the same width. The conductor tracks in *Latimer*'s drawing are shown as having the same width, and nothing in the specification of that reference states or suggests otherwise. Accordingly, *Latimer* fails to anticipate a flat flexible cable in which the *widths* of conductor tracks are staggered in an arithmetic sequence.

Claim 2 is rejected as unpatentable over *Latimer*. This rejection asserts that *Latimer* discloses the invention as in Claim 1 but does not disclose connectors connecting to the conductor tracks. As will be apparent from the applicants' discussion of Claim 1 in the immediately-preceding paragraph, the applicants disagree with the premise that *Latimer* "discloses the invention as claimed in Claim 1" apart from any question whether it would have been obvious to use electrical connectors to make electrical contact with *Latimer*'s conductor tracks. As previously mentioned, *Latimer* fails to disclose or suggest staggering the width of the conductor tracks in an arithmetic sequence. Nothing in that reference suggests to one of ordinary skill that particular structural arrangement or any benefit to be derived from that arrangement. Accordingly, a flat flexible cable having the structural and functional limitations of Claim 2 would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill at the time of making the present invention.

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Reply to Office action dated January 31, 2003

The foregoing is submitted as a complete response to the Office action identified above. This application should now be in condition for allowance, and the applicants solicit a notice to that effect.

Respectfully submitted,


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